

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for consideration given the present application. Claims 1-18 are currently pending and claims 2-9 have been withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 10 and 11 have been amended through this Reply. Claims 1, 2, 10 and 11 are independent. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the rejected claims in light of the amendment and remarks presented herein, and earnestly seeks timely allowance of all pending claims.

Interview

Applicant thanks the Examiner for granting the telephone interview with Applicant's representative on June 3, 2008. The summary of the interview will be incorporated into the Applicant's response

Finality of the Office Action

As discussed during the June 3, 2008 telephone interview, the Office Action is Final.

Amendment

Applicant respectfully submits that the amendments made to claims 1, 10 and 11 do not add any new matter to the application and do not raise any new issues.

- **The Claims Defined Patentable Subject Matter**

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 10-13 and 15-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over JP 2000-297823 to Kamikawa et al. (Kamikawa I); and rejects claims 1, 10-13 and 15-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over JP 2000-320562 to Kamikawa et al. (Kamikawa II) These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, "a width of the recessed portion or the groove portion in the axial direction is substantially constant, the fixed projecting portion or the salient portion is perpendicular to the axial direction, and the recessed portion or the groove portion is perpendicular to the axial direction." Independent claims 10 and 11 recite similar subject matter.

Applied references fail to teach or suggest the recited features of independent claims 1, 10 and 11.

In the present invention, the recessed portion and the groove portion radially extend from the end of the U-shaped opening portion with an approximately constant width. The width of the recessed portion or the groove portion in the axial direction is substantially constant, and that the recessed portion or the groove portion is perpendicular to the axial direction. Furthermore the fixed projection portion and the salient portion extend perpendicular to the axial direction. In other words, the fixed projection portion of the salient portion is perpendicular to the axial direction.

Kamikawa I discloses a bent shallow groove 10 that extends from the upper portion of the shaft inserting part 1 to the bottom. The width of the groove 10 is tapered from the top to the bottom. Thus, the width of the groove 10 in the axial direction is not substantially constant. The groove 10 is not perpendicular to the axial direction. Furthermore, Kamikawa I discloses that the projection 13 is positioned only at a point of the shaft. Thus, the projection 13 does not extend perpendicularly to the axial direction. Kamikawa II fails to cure the deficiencies of Kamikawa I. Accordingly, the applied references, alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the recited features of independent claims 1, 10 and 11.

Kamikawa II discloses that opening 3 is positioned in the middle of a side wall. The top corners 3A, 3B of opening 3 are bended, and the bottom corners 3C, 3D of opening 3 are rectangular. Thus the width of opening 3 in the axial direction is not substantially constant. Opening 3 is not perpendicular to the axial direction. Furthermore, Kamikawa II discloses that the ball 25 is positioned only at a point of the shaft insertion portion 7. This ball is not “a fixed projecting portion”, as discussed in our November 28, 2005 Response. The ball 25 is not extending perpendicularly to the axial direction. Kamikawa I fails to cure the deficiencies of Kamikawa II. Accordingly, the applied references, alone or in combination, fail to teach or support the recited features of independent claim 1, 10 and 11.

For at least the reasons stated above, independent claims 1, 10 and 11 are patently distinct from the applied references. The dependent claims are at least allowable by virtue of their dependence on corresponding allowable independent claims 1, 10 and 11.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections of the claims based on the applied references is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

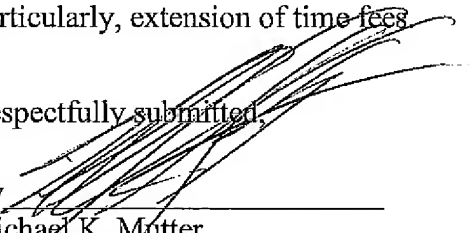
In view of the above amendment, Applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Obert H. Chu, (Reg. No. 52,744) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.147; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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